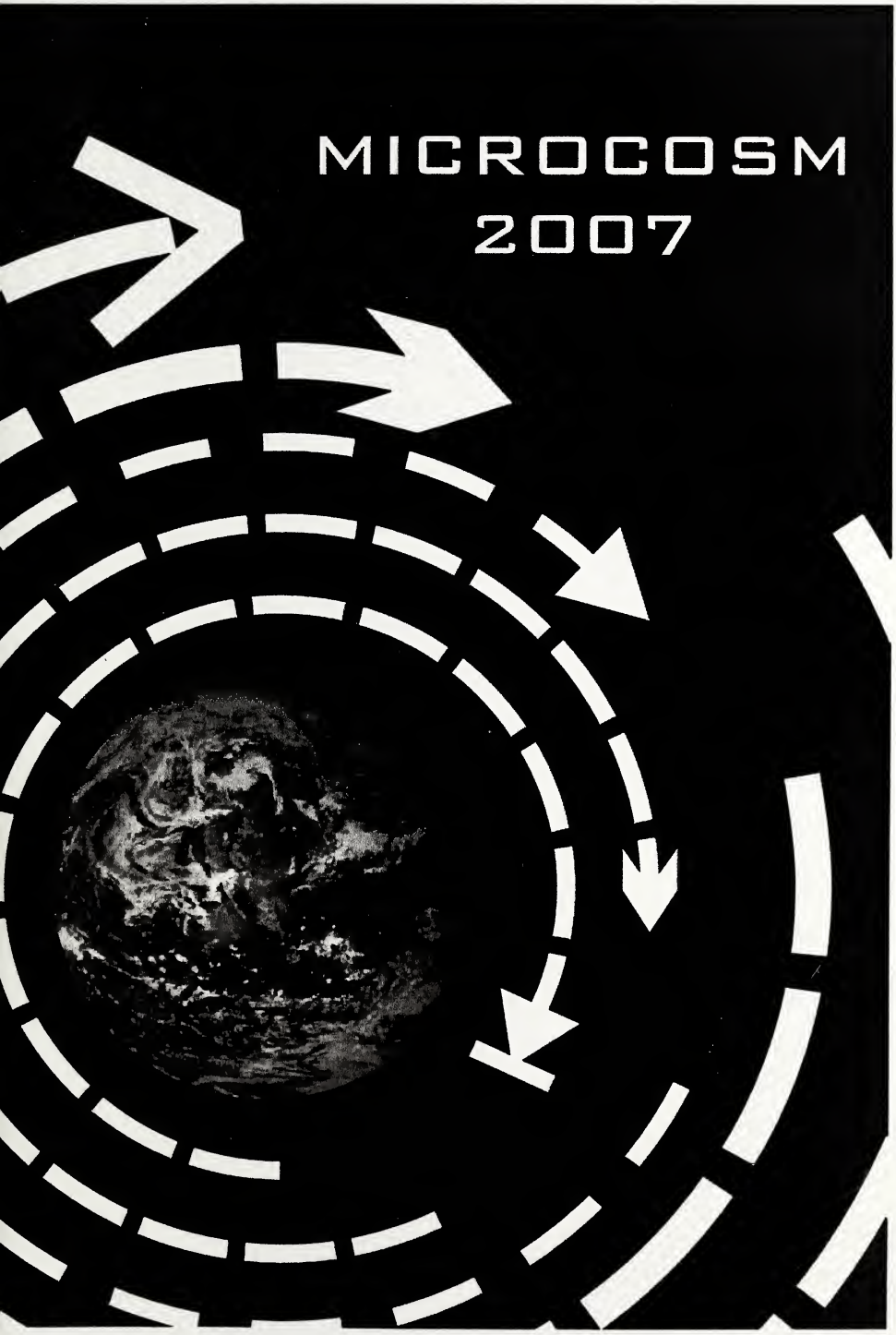
MICROCOSM 2007



Spring / Volume XXXIV

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/microcosm34unse

MICROCOSM

Sponsored by

Casey Peavy

Nicole Donald

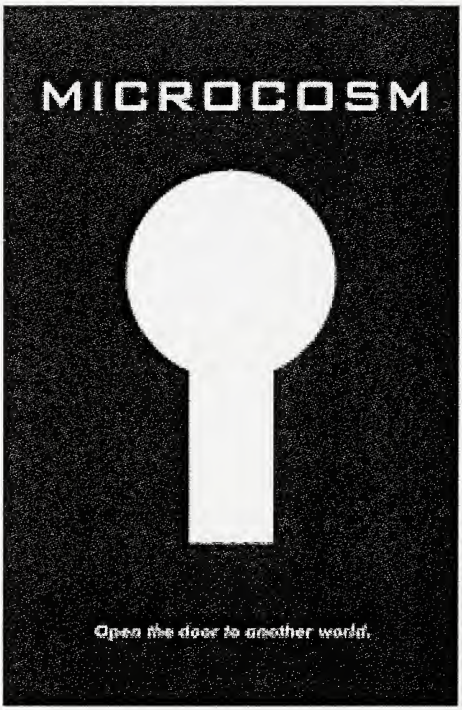
Special Thanks to

Gayle and Tom Ross

Michelle Trest

VOLUME XXXIV

SPRING 2007



Illustrator: Cory Holmes

Table of Contents

Song Lyrics

When I Hold You Close 5

Angels Away 8

Poetry

Dark 9

Beatnik PoemTerrorist/War 11

Determined 12

Generation X 13

I Remember...14

Looking for a Better Way 16

Meeting Generation 17

Indistinguishable 19

Simplicity in a Storm 20

Sea of Glass 21

Aces 23

Imagine 24

Fantasy Escape 25

Nearest Fern 27

The Porcelain Heart 29

Red and Glossy 30

To Write 31

The Waitress 32

Ballistic 34

Essay and Epistles

All Things Naked 35

Do You Act? 37

Short Stories

Thunderstorms and Anger 39

Love 42

Mr. Sandman 43

My Generation 47

Pain for Self 48

Technology: Not Always for the Best 53

Untitled 55

The Crack of the Whip 59

Illustrator: Nikki May

When I Hold You Close

Benjamin Dale Russell

When I hold you close,
And feel your breath,
It sends chills up
And down my spine

Then I kiss your lips,
And you feel my love.
It's when I hold you close,
That we are one

It's when I hold you close,
That we both know,
Our love is real.
It's when I hold you close,
You teach me to feel.
It's when I hold you close.

When you're gone away,
And far from me,
My heart, it longs
To be with you

Illustrator: Candice Strange

Then I dream of you,
And you're here with me.
Then I hold you close,
So close

It's when I hold you close,
That we both know,
Our love is real.
It's when I hold you close,
You teach me to feel.
It's when I hold you close.

When you're mad at me,
You're so far gone.
I plead to you
To come back home

Then I grab your fists,
And you cry out loud,
"Please stop all this,
And hold me close."
So close

It's when I hold you close,
That we both know,
Our love is real.
It's when I hold you close,
You teach me to feel.
It's when I hold you close.

(Repeat final refrain more freely follow by key change then the final line is repeated a few times and the song is ended on "So close.")

Illustrator: Jarrod Ashley

Angels Away

Patrick Mooney

Countin' flowers on the wall, aint got no money at all
you know I don't really care, because I hold her near

refrain: Take your time and fill her needs, show her what it means
To be a man indeed
Bite your tongue when you wanna say
Anything that might take your angel away

Don't ask her why she stays, she's here with you man you got it made
and when you get back home tonight boy, don't turn off the lights

refrain

This life I lead has made me crazy, the road in my minds eye
took a turn here lately, one thing's for sure as I get older
I tell you what, I still love to hold her

refrain

refrain

Dark

Benjamin Dale Russell

It's dark,
My head tosses from side to side,
I cannot sleep.

Thoughts entered my mind rapidly,
Confusion overwhelms me,
It's dark.

Someone stop the voices,
Heal the wounds that scar my soul,
Slow me down,
Light the darkness.

It's day,
The crowd of people migrate from place to place,
We are all alone.

A brightness can overcome our sin,
We can survive,
It's day.

I lift my eyes and cry out in agony,
I look to man for companionship,
As I beg for solace, none hear me,
Freeze time, and love.

Love all,
Love God,
Love people.

Help all
Help God,
Help people.

Save yourselves oh inhabitants of the earth,
See me in my agony,
See yourselves in your agony,
All is lost....

In dark.

Beatnik Poem
Terrorism/War

Jacob Paulk

Little kids strapped with bombs, silent alarms, bloody palms, dying brothers in your arms, if you want forgiveness read the book of Psalms... War in Iraq, huddled together inside a little shack, waiting on the next suicide bomber attack, here there is no white or black, anyone could die at anytime, a 3rd world country deprived, they believe it's righteous suicide, being thankful that u survived, its time to set our pride aside, its time to choose your side, terrorism is something from which you can't run from or hide, many soldiers dying, wives and families crying, international spying, the government constantly lying, soldiers in Iraq frying, 110 degrees in the shade, shaving with a sharp knife blade, soldiers wondering if they'll live another day, choking on gas grenades, staying up at night only to pray, marines going home not wanting to stay, trying to keep terror at bay, don't people understand that war is the only way, this is retaliation for what they did on 911, learning how to shoot AK47s, they were trained to kill from an age of seven , they don't care about their lives cause they don't believe in heaven, people overhead need to get it through their head, if not over there we fight over here instead, we fight them over there or we'll all end up dead...

Determined

Johnny Butler

Martin Luther King said, "I have a dream," I have one too.
I realized my dream from all the trials I've been through
Striving through my tribulations, I began my race
Knowing the road is lifelong, I decided to pace
Changing me and then the world, one step at a time
I couldn't see in the dark, so I chose to make my light shine
My mind is make up and I'm on my way
Past is what it is, it's yesterday
So first I bow down and on my knees I pray
"Lord please give me strength to run the devil away"
Second by second, day by day
The closer I get, it seems farther away
But my mind is made up, this is a fact
So I'm a keep plowing and NEVER LOOK BACK

Generation X

Brian Channell

We got kids on the corner sellin' rocks,
Goin' around thinking its cool shootin' up the blocks
Teenage moms in the back getting high,
Shootin' up shit now she's wonderin why
Mama's wantin' to know when their boys are comin' home,
But in the morning there's just gonna be even more of em gone
People wanna know when is this war gonna cease,
It's only gonna be when the middle-east finds peace
Its just man killin' man killin' man,
While back at home we got folks cookin' shit in pans
They're sellin' this stuff called crack to kids,
Why are they buyin' it everybody knows that crack kills
The struggles and stress and the chemical dependencies,
The decisions that I've made is what separates me
Givin' it all up for good reasons,
Now I'm seein' the times of better seasons
Walkin' away from the hate and damnation,
Let's make a difference this my generation!

I Remember...

Leslie Hallman

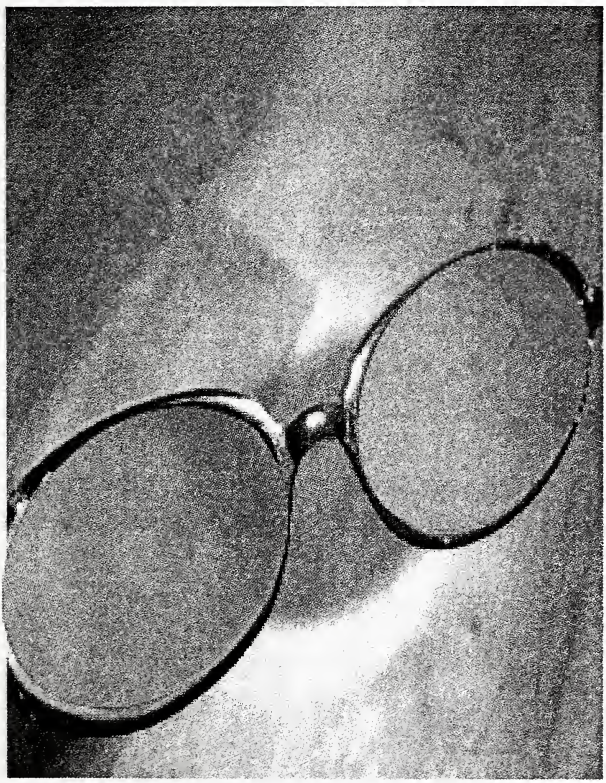
I remember pig tails and hot fudge Sundays.
Grade school and dreaded Mondays.
Hag-like teachers,
and long winded preachers.
Anticipating recess and dodge ball
Thinking back upon it all
those were the best of days.
When life was simple in every way.
There were no worries, no strife,
no pressures of everyday life.
But friends that vowed to never change
Did and what a shame.

When loved ones died but new were born
Like pictures that are faded and worn
The memory is crystal clear
Almost as if they were still here.

I remember life before reality TV
Before we turned the average into deity
Before people went Survivor crazy
Before America turned lazy

I remember ol' junky trucks
Hauling around trophy bucks
Red necks hoping and hollering

With several cops following
Oh that's right that was yesterday
Ha ha ha!



Illustrator: Holly Loyd

Looking for a Better Way

Johnny Butler

First, know the truth and focus on the light
Steer from what's wrong and simply do what's right
Realizing ALL past mistakes
Narrow road, the only road we must take
Understanding is only a portion
Without action, it is merely distortion
Listen and follow to learn and lead
Remember harvest time when planting your seed
Play your cards, go against all odds
Aim for the sky so if you miss, you're still amongst bright stars

Meeting Generation

Jessica Lamar

I was walking down the road one day on a hot afternoon

When I came across a woman who looked beaten and abused.

Her clothes were torn, her face was worn, her eyes a sad, sad grey.

And as I went to help her I could tell she had something to say.

She said "girl, who do you think you are? I don't need your help, I ain't got far.

You think I'm helpless and can't do for myself

But can't you see that it's you that needs the help.

Don't give me that look, I know how it sounds

But you have no idea how long I've been around.

Don't touch me, girl be on your way

And just forget you had this day.

I'm a killer, a raper, a liar, a taker.

My sins are written on my face, and for I've done, I deserve my fate.

I've beaten children and have touched them where I shouldn't

And hurt others in ways that even Satan wouldn't.

I've never cried over what I've done

It's just my way of having fun.

I've stolen from the poor and have made bad use of the bored.

I'm the one whose taken all those missin' people

And the judgment written on my soul has made me more than evil.

I'm behind the murders, perverts, gamblers, and cheats

And I'm the one thing around you, girl, can't beat.

I'm only getting worse, you see

And I can't help but smile

Because my name's Generation, girl

Time's one and only child.

Now leave so I can do my work,

I've really got to go."

And as she walked away I couldn't help but cry and wonder how

We ended up turning this old world into something worse than hell.

Illustrator: Brittany Jenkins

Indistinguishable

Michelle Trest

Amazing isn't it the way the human mind works
the ability of emotion to overpower intelligence
the inevitability that decisions are accompanied by pain
that conscience battles instinct and memories conflict reason
disheartening isn't it the consequences of life
the never-ending cycle of happiness and sorrow
the faltered circle of gain and defeat
that indistinguishable boundary of dreams and reality
is it not unbearable the uncertainty of ourselves?

This is what I hold to be most true in life, it is the person who is able to maintain two conflicting ideas without being torn apart that is most worth being, knowing, and understanding. For often truth is only known in part and discovered through discussion. To be able to control an opinion, emotion, or thought is success in life.

Simplicity in a Storm

Michelle Trest

The sun is out and now we see
Devastation's everywhere
Boats sit where the school used to be
And for now we stand to stare

This storm has taken everything
And left a mess behind it
But in the darkness some still sing
"Our savior we'll never forget"

No matter what their faith stays strong
And lifts our spirits daily
Their God's their strength; they're saved by grace
Soon he'll save us to - maybe

Young children describe this the best
"It smells like dead." They say
There's nothing left for us to do
"Even Daddy's bowed to pray"

Our homes were washed to cement blocks
Our streets are covered in sand
"It scares me that the doors can't lock"
"Help me, Mommy, hold my hand."

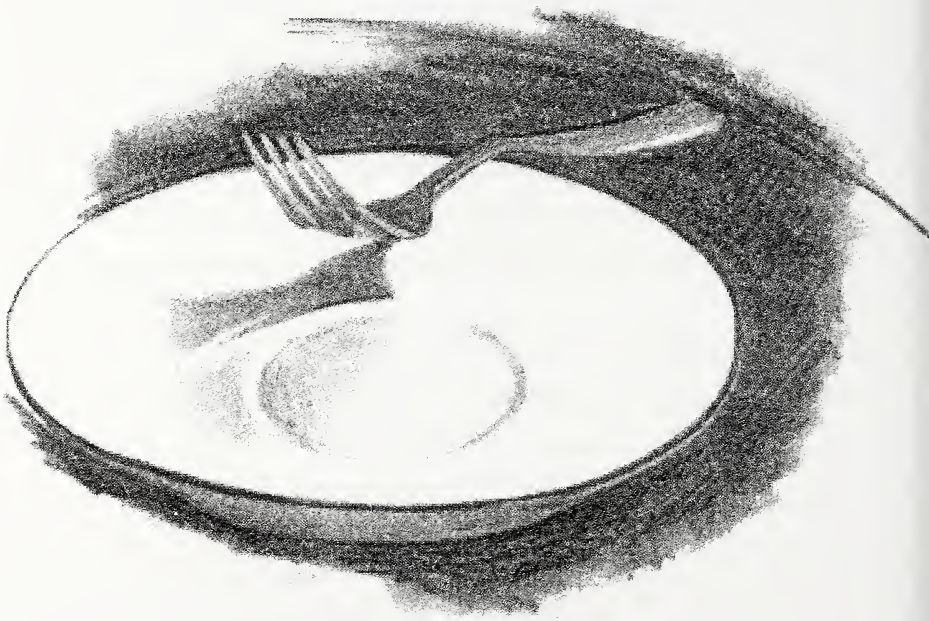
Sea of Glass

Michelle Trest

Dreams are like a sea of glass-
Enchanting, beautiful, and just out of reach.
Like crystal they shatter, unveiling reality
As each wave crashes on to the beach.
What seemed so perfect from a distance
Now appears common as it comes into focus;
But for a moment that dream was ecstasy
In momentary pleasure it has served its purpose.
Just as a sea of glass in the end is useless
Dreams are merely and escape for the mind.
The problem with dissolving dreams is that
Ideologue pleasure could not withstand trouble of any kind.

She walks along a street of bricks
Memories come flooding back.
Home she is, if it exists.
Here, July is as long as life
But winter seems to fly.
So many dreams fulfilled and lost;
So many hurdles passed.
Streets of brick beneath her feet,
And nothing seems to change
She'll leave this place and she'll forget
She ever shed a tear.

For now she's grown
And this has been
What brought her to today,
But perfect is the face of present,
This was yesterday.



Illustrator: Nick Brown

Aces

Michelle Trest

Longing so to be her own,
She cut herself to show
The power that her hand could yield.
She tied a bracelet there to prove
To those who saw her cry,
Everything was well.
She did it for herself
She said.
She said this would not be her death.
I own it all she said
And then for weeks she never slept.
She's malnourished, Doctor read.
"No" she said.
I'm strong enough to do this
By myself.

Imagine

Michelle Trest

Nothing to do and a sea of blue,
A perfect invitation for imagination.
A field of daisies, cute and lazy,
A world to please a little girl.
Waves crash like rolling glass,
A dance of simple brilliance.
Rainbow colors paint the snow,
The final part in her work of art.
For Justin

All alone in an empty pool my life's now passing me by.
It's like swimming against the current - trying harder and harder
Still going nowhere I want to be.
I can hear the world - I can see my goal,
Bit it remains just out of reach.
Dark quiet hall with no people around - where do I go now?
It's like running away from the wind - trying harder and harder
Still going nowhere I want to be.
I can see you call me - you speak my name,
But I can't escape this fog.
Empty space where my name ought to be - I can't do this again.
It's like running a race with no end - trying harder and harder
Still going nowhere I want to be.
I can feel nothing - there's heat all around,
But this moment doesn't seem real.
All alone in an empty pool my life's now passing me by.

Fantasy Escape

Michelle Trest

She lives in a fantasy world-
A place beyond what we can see,
Where all girls are princesses and unicorns run free
They play behind waterfalls in secret caves
Lacing beautiful flowers into bracelets and crowns
Giggles fill the air and smiles light their world
Their games last all day until the twinkle of stars are the only lights in the deep blue of the dark night sky

With the night comes reality
And the worst of her fears
Facing them she sheds many tears,
But by the light of day

They swim in the cool waves of the crystal sea
Racing friendly dolphins and watching colorful fish
Sounds of singing and laughter ring through the trees
They play happily until the day has gone and the stars come out to dance in the deep dark blue sky of night
With the night comes reality
And the worst of her fears
Facing them she sheds many tears,
But by the light of day

She lives in a fantasy world-
A place beyond what we can see,
Where all girls are princesses and unicorns run free

Illustrator: Cameron Newell

Nearest Fern

Ben Brassfield

If I stand alone in this world
Sadness will not bind me.
Attention of those most important
Will only alter my findings.

Leave me at the point of no return.
Give me pleasure at the nearest fern.
Look at me through the prism.
Do not laugh at my emotional embolisms.

I do not have a hemorrhage of the heart,
But I bleed for you in times of dark.
Stating the truth of my chemistry for you,
Would be a lie if my heart was painted blue.

Through thickets of roses in a far off land,
I see your smile in the palm of His hand.
Why give yourself to that which is notorious
For being the one who sings His own chorus?

Believe in me and my crooked ways.
One day I will find my place in this maze.
A maze we call life, a pantry of drugs.
One that delivers the worst but never gives hugs.

Your time with me is short and physical.
It can be a time of strong feelings that are mental.

I am easily amused by space and misfortune,
But neither of those will be used for your torture.

If you have any questions that I refuse to answer,
Just know that I am listening, you are not a cancer.
I take back things I have not said yet.
It is impossible for me to have any regret.

The memories we made were fortunate enough to be bolded
By the text in my mind that is constantly molded.
Do not give a reason for leaving me alone.
I refuse to be at the nearest fern when my feelings turn to chrome.

The refuge you can take in me will be pleasing to the eye,
But it can fool you if you break down and cry.
I will try my best to not stop your ambitions.
Remember the nearest fern when you make your decisions.

The Porcelain Heart

Erica Smith

The porcelain heart sits on the strong shelf
Unaware of the storm brewing outside
The wavering walls no longer prove help
The porcelain heart wants only to abide

It sits there quietly wanting to be heard
As the shelf begins to shake and shudder
Scared and alone help is its only word
The hard wooden planks act as a buffer

He watches as the Porcelain Heart shatters
A wave of tears fills His large loving eyes
As He picks up the pieces of the clatter
He mends them and takes away all the lies

He takes the Porcelain Heart and makes it new
Love takes over and the Heart makes its debut

Red and Glossy

Zak Tillotson

(To be read aloud)

Red and glossy Is the way I see the world, too much for you to Handle? This my friend.

Cerebral palsy Is controlling all our world. Too much for Oily hands? Are a wealthy mans best friend.

Its crazy to me how we, so called, legally let them rob us of our right to speak.

As for me, I will fight To be free. Isn't a privilege, it's a right from he.

So if necessary, f**k bureaucracy, f**k all your diplomatic hypocrisy.

Minimum wage is like fools gold for Your pay, for what you get is what they want to give.

Your power abuse is tightening up the noose, is around my neck, is around your neck my friend.

So strike up your fuse, they don't bleed but they bruise. We may not win, but remember; we can't loose.

Genocide is the naked truth that They hide, behind the wool that's been pulled over your eyes, are damn sure blind.

To Write

Johnny Butler

To write is a feeling
Done so freely as just chilling
An open kind of motion
As waves are in the ocean
Expressed from the heart straight out of mind
Through thoughts to your writing hand, via direct line

To write is to dream letting the imagination free
Out of darkness into light, once blind now can see.
Write with a passion, don't hold back
And watch ones who doubled you slowly crack
Be strong in your writing fierce, aware
Never let your guard down; make readers beware
Your writing explains you
Let no one tame you

Writing is an escape, from troubles to worry free
The mind is your anchor it determines what shall be

The Waitress

By Jason Martin

Faded and worn
The bar was covered in wood grain like plastic.
Yellow, was the bar, like the inside of a southern pine.
A worn spot in front of where each stool belonged.
The stools, covered in red vinyl, cracked and split.
I can still hear the town folk conversing.
The women gossiping, the men talking about their farms.
The women wore their white hair teased like a fluffy cloud.
And green John Deere hats sat gently atop the mans head.
The smell of stale coffee and cigarettes.
These were the things that were comforting to me.
There is a sweet young waitress
She kept the brown-orange mug full of the liquid that kept me alive.
I loved the coffee mugs, as old and ugly as they were.
I went there to study.
Despite the noise and smells, I found the place peaceful.
She is what made it peaceful, the waitress.
She would walk by and fill my cup,
Saying a few kind words and revealing a smile.
A smile that could light up the darkest hours of the night.
I never looked up from my books unless I felt she was near-by.
I occasionally glanced over at her while she worked diligently behind the bar.
Truth be told, I never got much studying done.

My mind was always else-where.
Who am I kidding?
I didn't go there to study,
I went there to be in her presence.
At the end of her shift her boyfriend would walk in.
She would give him a kiss, the kiss I wanted to receive.
Ha! Silly me.
Quit dreaming and start studying.

Illustrator: Nick Brown

Ballistic

Zak Tillotson

Ballistic and righteous, we march now with death; Stars on our cape, and blood on our breath. Suggest to the rest, "there's no heart in your chest," as we wield sword and prod, and oil as our crest. We say, "We'll show them freedom" as the monster devours flesh. Lead forth; we say, as fathers, we're bastards at best.

Illustrator: Nikki May

All Things Naked

Benjamin Dale Russell

"Sometimes I feel like I'm superman. Put on my cape just to please the crowd..." are lyrics to the contemporary Christian song, Crowd Pleaser, by Josh Brister. Crowd pleaser is a song about an individual longing to be real and unconcealed. This song is part of what caused me to create my life motto, "All Things Naked." All Things Naked can be defined in many ways, but the most relevant are emotional exposure, true self-image, and actual intimacy.

As human beings we are often confused about our feelings and emotions. Our heart and mind are constantly in a struggle for control. I remember hard times I went through growing up and my constant confusion on what my true feelings were. This confusion has only worsened as I have grown older and been given harder decisions to make. It is through belief and practice in the ATN concept that we conquer emotional disarray. When we expose our true emotions to ourselves, decisions seem to just happen, rather than actually being decided on. Also, we teach the world who we are as real human beings, therefore allowing people to become accustomed to actuality. Emotional exposure is a vital part of ATN and allows a human being to become more authentic with him or herself.

Self-image is simply how one views oneself. Schizophrenics hide who they really are from themselves by creating fictitious characters in their mind. Often we mask our self-image due to the fear of who we are much like this. We do not necessarily create imagi-

nary friends or extra personalities, but we tend to keep ourselves in denial about our faults and strengths. To have true self-image, means that we are real with ourselves and emotions, as well as the people surrounding us. We should not hold back the truth that lies within us. We must expel the beauty that is buried deep inside and come to terms with our weaknesses as individuals. Many traits including truth, realism, exposure, and self-image come together to create a human being that longs for intimacy.

Intimacy is not merely physical relationship between two human beings; it is raw. We all want relationships with one whom we love. The best way to describe this human longing is intimacy. Intimacy is a completely real, not-holding-anything-back, relationship that two beings share. Once we achieve realism with ourselves, we are prepared for human/human or human/God intimacy. We cannot be intimate with another person until we are intimate with ourselves; this is obvious. In the same fashion, a Christian person cannot have their needed relationship with God until they have discovered the many human characteristics that hold them back. ATN and intimacy often go hand in hand; once we achieve one, the other is sure to follow.

Humans tend to get so caught up in "pleasing the crowd" and "wearing a cape" we forget who we really are. We must learn to remain "naked" by being exposed emotionally, truthful to ourselves, and intimate with each other. I believe that All Things Naked is an excellent motto for life that encourages one to be his or herself. I attempt to practice it daily and hope the world will soon catch on. By adopting this concept we can eliminate stereotypes, build bridges, and be better people. Now, I stand and remove my "clothes" while shouting loudly, "All Things Naked."

Do You Act?

Jason Martin

Dear Friend,

I am writing to you in order to find a person who will accept some ideas I have been exploring. My latest adventure into human action has been one of social interest. So here I pose a few questions: Do you ever feel, as if in social interaction, you are acting? Have you ever thought about getting out of bed and climbing into your character? Have you ever acted a certain way in a social environment in order to personify some of your traits? Do you change in action and character as you change social environment? If you can positively answer any of these questions, you're an actor. You play a role on the stage of life. We all do it to some extent. Folks usually do not act the same way around their parents or people of seniority as they act around their friends. Therefore, that is acting. Some folks are uncomfortable admitting these actions, but it is normal. Whether we mean to act or it is a subconscious effort, we still do it. Each of us has our own style and flair, being our character. That character is further exemplified by the way we dress, the things we say, and our interest among various other factors. This is the framework of who we are to become to our audience. People whom often portray similar roles or character tend to form a group. Our image is shaped according to how this company of similar performers react as we act. Depending on the feedback of our audience, the world, we adjust our actions to better reflect the image or impression we want to obtain. As we are acting, we are also an audience, reciprocating the feedback as well. Feedback can be a positive reinforcement or a negative one. Needless to say, our positive actions result in positive feedback wich promotes more of such actions. Example: When a performer (person) says something funny, his company laughs, this influences him to make more of the same kinds of gestures to continue to positive feedback. This may seem like an egoistic action, but man cannot live on neutral feedback alone. There is an opposite to this positive reinforce-

ment. Obviously, it is negative. When the actor or person makes an inappropriate or humiliating gesture, we often call this a "faux pas." This slip up in performance semi-destroys the character the actor has worked diligently to set up. Then when their company makes a public notice of this unmeant gesture, it often causes a quarrel, continuing the negativity. For if the performer knew the humiliating consequence of his gesture, I am sure they might not have done it. It often takes a long time for a person to create his character, but only a second to destroy it. These interactions within a company, much like in real theatre, is called a scene. This is sociology on a micro level. I have been carefully watching my peers performance. I take notice to how they interact according to different conditions and situations. There are so many phenomena which I cannot even begin to explain nor pretend to understand. Because I am aware of this dramaturgical perspective, I harshly judge my own actions. This has influenced me to think before I act more often. I hope you shall gain insight to human actions as a result of this letter. But remember, do not judge anothers performance, for you too are a struggling actor.

Sincerely,

The Observer of Life

Thunderstorms and Anger

Toni Dobbins

Out of a lavender and gray sky the lightening strikes, thunder roars and the wind wails.

On the heels of a tumultuous argument, I retreat to the comfort of my old rocking chair on the front porch. As I gaze out at this magnificent storm I contemplate the comparisons of my anger and the storm; how alike in the dance of life they are, the intensity of the raging, the length in which it will last and the effects after the assault.

Off in the distant horizon there is a flickering movement growing ever nearer. The heat is feeding the storm as air feeds a bed of coals into a raging inferno. The storm brews, churns and builds until it can no longer be contained. It rumbles, letting everyone know the inevitable is about to unfold. Will it be a small shower, dying down quieter than it came, or will it be the beast it professes to be, fierce and turbulent? No different is my anger, it is there inside me, on the outer fringes waiting quietly, simmering. The kindling that stokes this fire is highly diversible; it could be something as trivial as dirty dishes or as significant as deceit. Depending on the infraction, my anger can be as subdued as a spring shower or as ferocious as a roaring tornado careening across an open field. I wonder how long it will last?

The showers of spring can be such flighty things, lasting mere moments while the sun still shines or lingering for days with drizzling rain. Likewise, the monstrous storms of summer can wildly blow in, last a

little while and be gone or tarry for endless hours. In comparison, during times of minor aggravation, the emotions that stem from my anger come hastily and are as fleeting as a sun shower. However, during extensive episodes of anger, like the monstrous storms of July, the words and actions come quickly. The battle of the wills drags on for days. Will the ramifications of these storms, be them nature or anger, be ones that we can live with?

As a result of the arriving spring rains, every color of the rainbow has sprung forth from the ground in a glorious renewal of life. While we await the coming of summer's monstrous storms we hold our breath, knowing the possibility that loss of life and property could be ours.

The storms bring with them high winds, hail and torrential rains and send the trees to dancing an eerie kind of dance as wind whips through their branches. When the worst storm comes, in its wake will lay vast destruction, downed trees, power outages, car wrecks, flooding and destroyed homes. My anger is truly no different than spring rains or summer storms. There is on one hand, if I choose, the possibility of learning,

growth and renewal. While on the other hand is a path of destruction, words that can never be erased, tears, broken hearts and a destroyed home.

In the comfort of my old rocking chair, I contemplate how alike in the dance of life they are, my anger and this magnificent storm, the intensity of the raging, the length in which it will last and the effects after the assault.

Photo submitted

Love

Erica Smith

Love is such a beautiful experience. I remember the first day I met Him - I was young and impressionable. The sun shown through the stained glass windows creating beams of rainbow colored light. I sat quietly with my friends while He approached me so strong and dignified yet gentle and compassionate.

My heart longed for One like Him. He knew my every thought and could meet my every need. My True Prince had entered my life and I did not even realize it. My life was His and peace overwhelmed me. I was no longer alone.

He took me by the hand and led me to a place where nothing mattered except for pleasing Him. He read to me each morning and night beautiful words of life. His presence was with me every passing moment of each day. I awoke to his calm sweet voice telling me how loved I was.

Years later, my beauty still pleases Him and my hands still serve Him. He continues to breathe life into me and in return I tell people of this amazing man and what He has done for me.

"No greater love is there than this, that a man should lay down his life for a friend." I am not only a friend, I am His true love.

A crimson flood pours over me each day enabling me to love Him with all of my heart. One dark shadow covers my small body as I take the paths laid out for me by Him. The shadow is the cross of which I bear for Him each day in remembrance of the cross on which He hung for me.

One day, a holy union will take place between my beloved and me. Until then, I will bask in the love He provides.

Mr. Sandman

Benjamin Dale Russell

Introduction

Mr. Sandman is my interpretation of actual events. Yes, the events in the story did happen, but to what extent? Things happen to all of us; no story is more interesting than the other. It is the way we tell at story that makes it interesting. As a writer, it is my job to make the story real no matter what or who. This is why I've chosen not to name my characters. I've left them as "He" and "She"(or "Him" and "Her" whatever. You get the point.) to make the story more real. Every human being either has or is a "He" or "She". Although "She" is a mother and "He" is a son, they are ultimately the same. Both are tattered individuals, but both have different reasons. "His" mother died; "Her" father was a drunk. We all have been hurt. We are all tattered, but in the end it doesn't matter. What matters is love. What matters is compassion. In the end, do you want to be remembered for the amazing love you showed to mankind-like "She" showed "Him", or do you want to be remembered for the scars you have and have caused-like "Her" mother gave to "Her" and the following generations? Show love. Get love. Heal scars. Enjoy the story.

The Present: "She"

Pain. She wakes up; her eyes open. Darkness. She gropes for a wall-a floor-anything. She is suspended in nothingness: lost and distraught.

Illumination. Light. Pain. She opens her mouth and begins to sing, "Mr. Sandman, bring me a dream...." The sound croaks out with a raw hideous beauty- a beauty that would stop time if it had been moving in the first place.

The song ended, and she spoke with urgency, "I used to sing to them. I loved them. I just want to be with them...that's all...just be with them...I want to sing to them.." A great fear could be heard in her voice; she knew where she was. This is the end; She knew it, and She is afraid; She is absolutely petrified. She tosses her head searching for any sign of life. She

opens her eyes wider, but the brightness is overwhelming. This was her last plea-her final call-she knew it, and all she could say was, "I want to be with them. I want to sing to them." Again She sang, "Mr. Sandman, bring me a dream.."

The past: "He"

He lays in bed. She sits at the edge running her fingers through his hair. Happiness. Sound drifts out of her mouth; it pauses to dance on a molecule of air; like wine it matures and improves with each moment it exists; it reaches his ear. Sweetness. Her song fills Him up and leaves Him with longing for more. It's spectacular- so beautiful- utterly amazing.

Her song used to be so beautiful. Each note would dance in the listener's ear until the next arrived. They would wish it never to end, but like all things, it was taken for granted. The song- so pure-so beautiful- is wasn't appreciated until it left. He missed it.

He's older now- much older. He cries at night longing to hear Her again, but She is gone; they've taken Her and Her voice; She's gone now. He closes his eyes and hears her song once more. Again, She sits on the edge of his bed, runs Her fingers through His hair, and sings. Her image waits there with Him until he drifts into a cold lonely sleep. She fades away...gone forever.

The Past: "She"

She is younger now. She looks around in bewilderment; Her father sits on the couch; he is drunk. The frail body Her spirit had once inhabited was gone, and now, Her soul donned a more youthful-lovely-one.

She remembers having this body. She remembers Her life the way it used to be: beautiful, happy, joyous, tattered, and broken. She remembers her father: alive, drunk. He sat on the couch tinkering with some contraption or another. The TV flickered monotonously as condensation dripped from his beer can onto the coffee table forming a ring. Periodically, he would look up from the "work" he was completely absorbed in and say something profane at the television. He would beckon his wife, scream at her, and take a drink. After this, he would resume working.

Meanwhile, She sat in the corner watching her father. She hated him for doing this to Her-to himself, but She loved him. She hated herself for hating him; it hurt-the hatred; She cried. Anger and tension grew more prevalent as Her mother's descent began. Eventually, it would end. When the alcohol became too much for her father, his body-frail and weakened-would ease their pain.

Pain. It only got worse. Pain...

Her mother's descent didn't last much longer than that. The demons worked on "mommy" quickly. Maybe it was because she was weakened by her husband, or maybe some other force had a hand in this twisted play of horror. What every it was, bottom was finally reached. Ironically, the bottom of her mother's descent was at the bottom...of a river. Water filled her lungs and carried her away to a happier place than this, one free of demons.

She was orphaned now, left to fight her demons alone. The experience had been replayed in her mind repetitively, but this time she lived it again-like she once had in the past. The events ran over and over again in her ectoplasmic mind.

The world faded again, and the nothingness enveloped all-"Mr. Sandman..."-"I used to sing to them..."-"I loved my children..."-"What is this? Where am I? Make it stop, I beg you..someone..just make it stop.." Pain.

The Present: "He"

He stood at the lectern in front of all those people; although he had something written, he had no idea what to say. All that was inside him now was darkness-cold-alone-pain...

"She loved her children. We all have our demons; they torment us. Some have been blessed with other to help them fight off hell's minions, but she..went at it alone. A far nobler fight than I'm willing to fight. She could've had help: she asked once; she was forsaken; she asked twice; she was forsaken. The world hated her. She didn't wear their labels-your labels-my labels. She refused to be put into a box-so be it! Like Vincent Van Gogh she was an enigma. We'll never fully understand her. The only window into her mind-her soul we have is us-her

children. She loved her children... She sang, 'Mr. Sandman, bring me a dream...' She loved her children... Thank God, She LOVED her children."

Pain. The darkness took him. The darkness took them all: alone, sad, bitter, angry. Some conquered their demons, some failed; regardless, the darkness took them all. We will all fall subject to the darkness. All will be alone, sad, hungry, pain. Enveloped, we'll be taken by it. The darkness. You may fear it if you would like; you can run if you lack apathy, but like Her, the darkness will take us all. We'll follow our own pains to It, and we'll be carried away by It to a far greater place where demons no longer conquer us. No pain. Darkness.

END

"Everybody each and all, we're gonna die eventually..."

Rich Mullins

My Generation

Zak Tillotson

Ballistic and righteous we march now with death, with sadistic addictions and blood on our breath. Murder and money, corruption and greed, corporate abominations, and cops selling weed. With stints in our freedom, our government's F***ed up. They got us paying for their hotels, golf trips, and trucks. Benjamins, spinners, Cadillacs, and guns. We're laboring blind, while they snatch up our funds.

Capitalist and mighty, we weed out the weak. You want my paycheck to fund your fighting, well you can kiss my asscheek. One nation under king, that's where we stand as of now. He nailed us down; hands and feet, after we crowned his oily brow. An ignorant generation given a false sense of salvation through damnation of a nation; whom we f***ed and trampled down.

A man for himself, isolation is what's become the theory of our nation, we're drinking sand; under thumb. Taking what we can from our master, uncle sam, we'll lie, chat steal, and kill; even bite our feeding hand.

We love to dream and talk and shout, about the things that drive us out. With yellow bellies, and minds untaught, we ignorize a much needed thought.

Working for nothing and praying for less, we follow the dollar, and not the heart in our chest. It seems to me, revolution is the solution; more, our destination. A sincere concern and a hope for change, is all I have for my generation.

Pain for Self

Jason Martin

Dear friend,

I write you again seeking another being which might accept more of my crazy ideas. As usual, I beg the answers of a few questions. Have you ever caused yourself pain in order to prevent disappointment? Have you inflicted humility upon yourself in order to better your character? These questions shall be the prose of this letter. As a forewarning, I generally do not use the word "you" in my writings, but in this quite personal case I will. It is a transparent word that our eyes tend to skip over in order process the rest of the sentence. Using the phrase "a person or ones self" becomes tedious when reading. So for all intensive purposes I have replaced the more proper phrases with "you." I hope you have read the ode titled "The Waitress." I wrote of a young lady whom I was fond of yet could not have. I will use this poem to exemplify the next set of philosophies I am presenting. At the end of the poem I saw the waitress's boyfriend kiss her, the kiss I wanted to receive. For the purpose of posterity and point in case, I did indeed receive the kiss I wanted. "Then why did the boyfriend kiss her, why not you," one might ask. Well, it is very simple; I caused myself to believe there was another man in her life in order cause myself a little pain. "Why cause yourself pain?" you may say. I will tell you. It is an altruistic action which I use to bring humility to my character (altruistic means to act selflessly or for the benefit of another person, it is the opposite of selfish). In this humility I must recognize that I am not the only man on earth. She could easily be with someone else. In realizing this, I shall better appreciate every moment I spend with her. So, in short, I caused myself a slight amount of mental and emotional pain and suffering in order to appreciate what I have. I would like to think that we all do this to a certain extent or at least to give this letter justification for writing. We may not all cause ourselves pain in this way. It can take many forms. We often are only half aware of this phenomenon if we are aware at all. A more applicable example can be found in the class room setting.

If you take a test but are not sure that you understand the material upon which you are tested, you may imagine yourself failing the test. When you get your test result back and discover you have made a decent grade you might become quite happy because you expected the result to be less than desirable. Another example: Say you really desired a particular object for your birthday. One might imagine themselves not receiving that gift in order to prevent themselves from being disappointed. Yet again, when that unexpected result occurs, you might be inclined to a bit more joy than if you had known for sure you would receive that present.

We now have made this action obvious, be it subconscious or an effort made, I shall attempt to explain this phenomena. Pain or suffering and humility are closely related, but we must first define these terms. We are already familiar with the term pain and suffering. We most often think of these terms as being applied in severe doses, often generating a negative connotation with the word. But suffering can be a good thing in small and controlled quantities such as the examples above. You shall not die if you make a bad grade or do not receive an expected gift. After all, the popular phrase does state; that which does not kill you only makes you stronger. Strong is not a bad thing, so we can sometimes expect a positive result of some forms of suffering. Having been through my share of family death and heart aches, I know that not all pain is good. I, like most folks, have been through pain which I was sure I could not endure. But the situation did indeed make me stronger. I also learned valuable lessons from that pain. An exception applies to the death of a love one, not much can be learned from this type of pain and suffering. With that being said, we must move on to define the term humiliation. You can rarely have one term without the other. Humiliation is often incurred when our actions are wrong, which in-turn causes a minute amount of pain. For example; your teacher asks a question and you have the confidence to answer that question but the instructor informs you that your answer is wrong. You may not think of this as pain, but an experience which is not positive is negative, which often results in a negative feeling. This is translated by our brain as emotional pain no matter how slight the negative reinforcement is. You

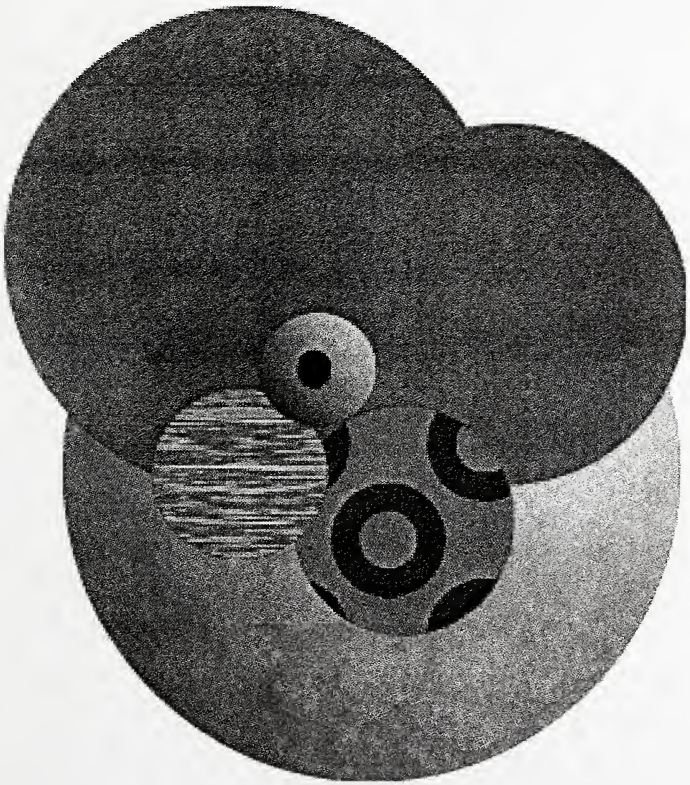
might also experience a bit of humiliation or embarrassment because the wrong answer which you gave might make you seem inferior to your classmates. Much like pain, humiliation can yield a positive result. By experiencing humiliation, we are reminded what actions or results are realistically within our grasp. This brings us "down to earth," as we say. When we experience humility, we tend to become more honest with ourselves. As we know, honesty is a positive virtue. The humiliation which was just defined by example is either inflicted directly by a person or the situation itself. There is another form of humiliation which we evoke upon ourselves on purpose. This is usually the kind humiliation that is spoke of in religion or philosophy and this is the only kind I am concerned with right now. The two kinds of humiliation are not the same, not even close. This second kind of humility is the kind that we use to add depth of character and honesty to our being. This is exemplified by the act of lowering yourself before another person, or to more plainly say, to realize that you are above no other person. We must realize, and most of us do, that there are people who posses more talent than us or have better skills in certain areas. A well practiced use of humility can greatly benefit our character. This practice keeps us on a chain, so to speak. This chain is long enough to allow us run around and plays, but also keeps us with our boundaries. Boundaries meaning, what is realistically within our grasp. You would not buy a thirty thousand dollar vehicle if you only have five thousand dollars. Although, these days you can finance just about anything. You might now feel as if I am talking circles, but it will all come together with due patience. In my case, I experienced self-inflicted pain to bring about humility which in turn kept me aware that I am not the only young man the waitress could be with. The result of this suffering and humility is that I can now better appreciate every next moment I spend with her. So, now we have come full circle. We all might not all apply this in the same way, as most people do not realize they are applying it at all. These phenomena can also veil itself as self-doubt, but is still an essence of pain.

I wish the small time you have spent inside my head has brought some realization of your actions or gave you good reason to have me committed to a psychiatric ward. I hope the

latter is not the case, as great minds such as C.S. Lewis have written entire books about human pain and suffering. My ramblings might not be as coherent as that of Lewis, but the concept is still there and I shall leave you to use the core concepts to form your own opinion on the matter.

Sincerely,

The Observer of Life



Illustrator: Cameron Newell

Illustrator: Nikki May

Technology: Not Always for the Best

Jim Freeman

With the 21st Century in full swing, our world becomes more and more convenient for the common man with each and every new technological advance. Electronics, robots, and computers collaborate to make doing menial tasks even more simple like the Lion robots combine to form Voltron in order to save the Universe. Unfortunately, these advances, like the primitive methods that existed before them, still contain many flaws. Sometimes, these flaws are greater even in the newer generation of innovations.

In the Summer of 2002, the French Club of Vicksburg (MI) High School journeyed to France, where I discovered many wonder things. I never eat salads without bleu cheese dressing, I replaced peanut butter with the superior Nutella hazelnut spread on my sandwiches, and if you said put Nutella on a crepe, it tastes absolutely heavenly. There were also some very unsavory things about France, such as the countless ripoff artists, panhandlers, nasty smells, and toilets programmed to attack American tourists.

The French, and Europe in general, seem not to believe in free restrooms for the masses. Instead, most of them charge you to use them, unless they are located in a private business. This method greatly failed, in the author's opinion, and has lead to an increase in public urination, which led to the addition of the smell of urine to go along with the scent of body odor and cigarettes that seams to permeate any large French city. The aforementioned restrooms usually have some minimum-wage slave sitting in a booth to collect your money and make change. We were in a coastal town in Brittany or Normandy (the name escapes me now) and the urge to relieve myself stuck me. In this instance, the public restroom facilities far out-surpassed any I had seen prior in my life. Instead of an attendant, I slipped my coins into the slot and the door to the lavatory

unlocked. I was impressed by the ultra-modern facilities, and proceeded to relieve myself in the chrome toilet of the future. The trouble started soon after.

During the process of relieving myself, the chrome toilet seat started to lower and immediate distress kicked in. As a side note, if the reader does not understand while a urinating male would panic over a toilet seat lowering, then ask your parents about it. I ceased the flow, and grabbed the seat to stop it. The mechanical seat ignored the resistance put forth against it and ultimately closed and flushed. I looked at the side panel, there were a number of buttons for me to push. Apparently I skipped the day in French class where we learned how to operate a robotic bathroom because I had no idea what any of the buttons said. I looked for "ARRET", which means stop, to no avail. I pressed random buttons until water started shooting at me from the ceiling. My panic turned into anger as I still needed to pee and now I was wet. The floor began to flood and I decided that I should leave. The only problem was that I was locked in, so I pounded on the door while my canvas shoes became soaking wet. The members of our group, being morons, thought it was just clever old Jim Freeman playing on a joke and a couple had the gall to laugh. I yelled for somebody to put their money in the stall and one of the chaperones, a borderline psychotic heifer, told me that I had to get out of the stall first. I screamed in frustration while random jets were shooting water all over the sink and toilet. Eventually, I think somebody finally got the point that I was stuck in the restroom and placed their money in the door, rescuing me from certain death. Not only did I deal with the humiliation pertaining to being the stupid American who doesn't know how to properly operate a toilet, but I also had squishy shoes all day.

In conclusion, your beloved author is terrible at writing conclusions so he'll leave you with this: doubt technology... and the French. Especially French technology.

Untitled

Jim Freeman

Fletcher found Irving where he usually was: asleep on the couch with drugs or paraphenalia carelessly laying next to his head. Fletcher noticed an empty bottle located near Irving's feet. Fletcher picked up the orange bottle and checked the label for the prescription: Zolpidem, a sleep aid. The prescription, as usual, was not for Irving Adams, but for Wanda Longstreet of 42nd Avenue. Fletcher cared little about Irving stealing somebody else's medication, what raised his concern was that his television was missing.

Fletcher knew Irving for about seven months, he could almost pinpoint the exact date since it occurred a week after his girlfriend left him. She cheated on him on a nearly weekly basis with various people, including policemen, circus performers, plumbers, and even an economist. On that fateful night, Fletcher, usually a straight laced individual, went out to the bar to meet women. This resulted in him being arrested for urinating in the Subway on the way home.. While sobering up in the drinking tank, Fletcher found himself near a breaking point due to a splitting headache and crippling depression. Irving came up to him and said he had some pretty good pills that would make him feel better. When they were released the next morning, Fletcher went home and soon enough, Irving showed up with a bottle of anti-seizure pills and they had a good time. Irving asked if he could sleep on the couch, this was met with no objections and he's been there since. Though pretty much a rotter, Fletcher didn't mind because Irving was an alright dude and didn't eat much food.

In the seven months living together, Fletcher started developing a bad habit. It would not be fair to call it a substance addiction, it was more of an addiction to getting messed up. Irving would not pay rent or buy groceries, but it seemed whenever Fletcher came home from his tech support job, Irving would be waiting at home with some delicious substance to

alter their realities. It didn't really matter what it was, sometimes Fletcher would come home with LSD, PCP, heroin, or pills. Sometimes they would be really desperate and resort to cough syrup, huffing household chemicals, and even eating a bottle of over the counter motion sickness pills just to see what happened. Fletcher came to the conclusion that Irving was an alright guy.

A notable exception to Fletcher's conclusion when he discovered the TV was missing. Fletcher was furious that Irving passed out pilled-out with the door unlocked while Fletcher was out so a crack head could waltz in and run away with a television.

"Irving, you son of a heifer! Wake up right this instant!" Irving stirred for a moment, and wearily said,

"Fletcherama, what is crackalackin?"

"So Irv, where the [these brackets replace words that are too unacceptable to print. You never know, a Nun is probably reading this story and she is probably horrified enough] is my Televison?"

"Bummer dude," Irving looked around, "Hey I have something better than the Television for us today," with that, Irving reached into his pocket and pulled out two large capsules packed with a brownish-green powder. "This," Irving handed one of the capsules to Fletcher and continued, "is the crushed up root of the Fundundo root from the Democratic Republic of Alizar in Central Africa. Shamans would use it for rituals sparingly, but it was declared illegal when two tribal chiefs signed a pact by smoking the leaves of it in a peace pipe. One leader thought he was a banana and lives in eternal fear of being peeled, while the other moved to America and became a Public Relations rep for former child star Millie Bordeux?'

"You mean the one who thought it would be a great idea for her to dress like white trash, star in a Jerry Bruckhiemer and release a sex tape in order to boost her appeal among the middle class?"

"The same one. Anyway buddy, you should stop asking questions and eat this little guy. It will do the body good."

Fletcher raised no objections as the capsule entered his oral cavity. He walked over and put King Crimson's In the Court of the Crimson King in the stereo and sat back in the couch. In the midst of a scorching guitar solo on "21st Century Schizoid Man", Fletcher blacked out.

Fletcher began gagging. Water apparently intruded his nostrils, but how? He opened his eyes and looked around. The bright florescent lights pierced into his vision, along with a stream of water, he gasped and closed his eyes again, bringing his head down to the porcelain floor. Using his best inductive reasoning, Fletcher came to the conclusion that he was in the shower in his bathroom. Also, he was naked. Fletcher came to the conclusion that the stuff Irving gave him was pretty gnarly. He crawled out of the bathroom and looked for his clothing. They were wadded up in the sink soaking in crimson water. He checked himself for injuries, but the only marks on his body were track marks from various needles holding various substances invading his body. There were no missing limbs, slit throat, split open head, or anything else that would merit the amount of blood in the sink. He shrugged and figured that it was probably something he spilled on himself and not blood. Noting that he was naked and that he needed to remedy that, Fletcher dug through the hamper for clothing, and, after performing the sniff check, dressed himself. He opened the medicine cabinet and found a bottle containing various narcotic painkillers and ate a couple random pills in an attempt to assuage the headache he apparently developed during the trip.

Fletcher walked into the living room and screamed like a fair-skinned scrawny young man would scream the first time he showered in prison would. Irving was passed out on the couch like he always was whenever Fletcher came to, but instead of snoring and occasionally farting, there was a hatched buried in Fletcher's head. Blood soaked footprints were in a line going past Fletcher and into the bathroom. The door was still locked, which meant nobody had entered the apartment between the time he came home from work to the current moment.

The phone rang, it was Moriarty next door. He was curious as to what merited Fletcher's shrieking. "Something..... bad... Irving.... he's- he's-"

"Who the hell is Irving?" Moriarty barked.

"My roomate... Irving... he's... he's-"

"What are you talking about boy? I haven't seen anybody over there ever since your girlfriend left you for that guy who collects semen from Zoo animals for artificial insemination. You really need to get out more, I think you're becoming delusional." Fletcher did not say a word, slamming the phone down and turning around slowly to face the couch.

Nothing.

Irving's mutilated corpse disappeared while Moriarty called. He looked around the apartment, thinking Irving had played a disgusting trick on him. While searching, Fletcher noticed that the countless empty pill bottles, needles, and crack pipes were gone. Instinctively, Fletcher looked at his arms which were now clear and healthy looking. His clothing still remained in the bathroom sink, but the water was cloudy with grime, not blood. The doorbell rang, it was Moriarty checking to see if everything was all right. Fletcher chatted with him for a couple minutes amiably about this really odd dream that caused him to scream. He also asked Moriarty if he wanted to go out to the bar with him since he needed to take up his advice pertaining to getting out more. Moriarty obliged.

That night at St. Aquinas Regional Hospital, a non-responsive Fletcher Kliedenwaulfsky was brought in by ambulance at 1:37AM. Fletcher had drank himself to the point of having a grand mal seizure and choked on his vomit. Attempts to revive Mr. Kliedenwaulfsky failed and he was declared dead at 2:13AM. Suspecting more substances than alcohol was involved, the county coroner ordered a toxicology test which revealed nothing in his system other than the aforementioned alcohol.

The Crack of the Whip

Zak Tillotson

Undermined and misunderstood, He's cold. The freezing sweat soaking his tattered tennis shoes chills his whole body as he clocks out. Another eight hour shift ends at the car wash and he heads home to a cold house and a meal of Ramen noodles. Beaten down by misfortune and strung out from shattered dreams, his ambitions no longer exist in reality. He is nothing more than a piece of the puzzle; a part of the game.

Morning comes again and he's out the door at sunrise. He stops to get some coffee and cigarettes. Now he's broke again. Arriving to the job early, his lone work ethic is put to good use. The few tips he makes are well spent on food, and gas; such things empty his pockets. Twelve o clock rolls around and he's the only one on shift. No lunch break today. Trying to stay sane, he sings songs as if it makes the time go by more quickly. He struggles to maintain his usual exuberance about the job site, as anyone would, being hungry and tired as he. He finds time to smoke a cigarette, if only for a moment, he can try to relax. It's tough though, for him, with so many things on his conscience; a new vehicle, bills, "I got kids to feed", he thinks to himself. A man rid of nothing but peace, and the constant reminder that you don't always get a second chance. This is Terry Wilson.

Mr. Biggums is a big guy. He smells of expensive cologne and cheap cigars. He speaks with a distinct sense of pride and accomplishment. Though he seldom carries cash, his bank account is far more massive than many American aspirations. He drives a Lincoln Navigator when he doesn't feel like riding Schaeffer style. Happy, I guess you could say. And for good reason.

It's Friday. Mr. Biggums comes in to the office about 10:30, as usual, and orders his secretary to get him his morning brew of coffee. If Mr. Biggums comes across as an asshole, don't mind it at all. He just feels important. He should. He is.

Mr. Biggums owns a chain of service stations running throughout Louisiana and Mississippi. - No he didn't start the chain. His father was very blessed, you could say, (rich), and thought it would be a good investment to buy out "Southern Star" service stations. Indeed it was a great idea and he passed it on to his son, the late Mr. Biggums.

You see, power is made by power being taken.

Saturday; such a great day. Terry doesn't have to go into work today. It's a well deserved holiday for him, after none at all for almost two months now. It would be even more pleasant if he didn't have to fix his car. - Terry got blind sided by an eighteen wheeler a few years ago by hot shot new company. Some how, the court decided that it was his fault, and that he was responsible for any and all damages. (I think the judge had a few dollars thrown his way for that one.) But that would never happen here in the most righteous America! - Filing for bankruptcy, and spending some hard time for misdemeanor marijuana charge, Terry is doing pretty good, compared to many. After getting his new grill put on his car, Terry takes his son to play baseball at the park.

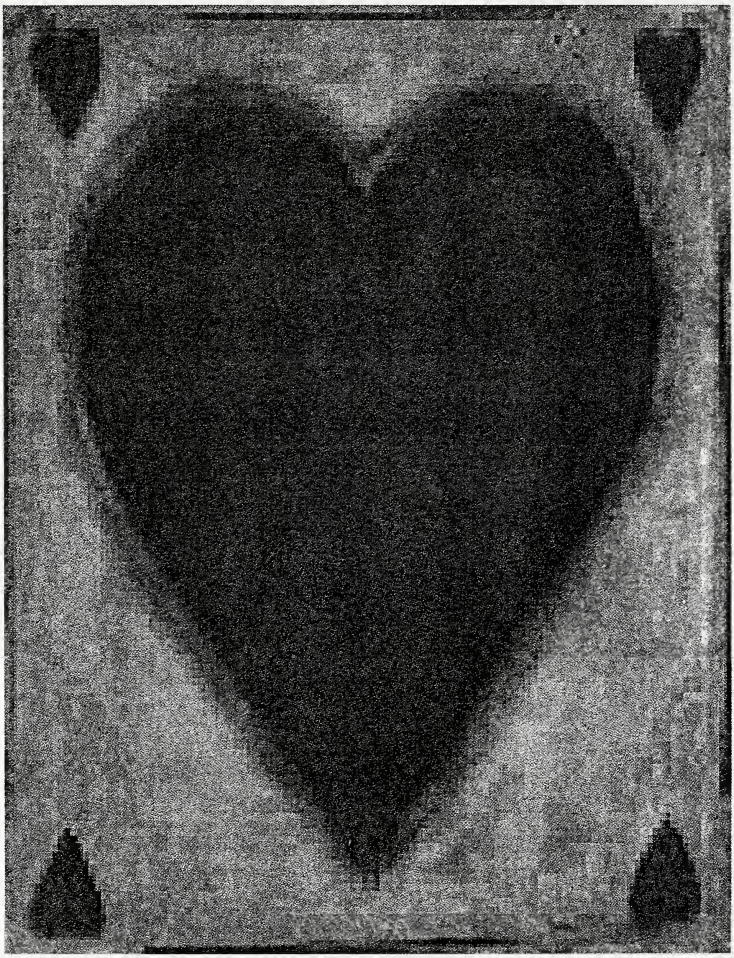
On Sundays, Mr. Biggums doesn't work, but he likes to stay on top of the game. He makes some coffee and his house maid already has breakfast made. Sitting on the back porch roasting a fat Cuban cigar seems like the perfect office space. "Whoa." Mr. Biggums comes across something strange. Store #17 in New Orleans, La; its profit has decreased by seven percent in the last month. Mr. Biggums isn't a dumb guy. He knows his facts, but, being handed a wealthy institution as he was, sometimes, the business mind deosn't always make decisions. He picks up the phone. "Yeah, Bryan?, hey man, store # 17, yeah, in New Orleans, ... I know, its down seven percent, whats that?, like five people?... six. Ok, make it happen... alright, bye." That's it. He's back even. Southern Star #17; profitable again with six fewer employees.

Monday morning; Terry and his wife are talking over breakfast. " I know honey, I don't like it anymore than you do," he says. "But that's the same company that plugged you when you were in that car accident," his wife says with a flame of

aggravation. The phone rings. Terry answers, wondering who would be calling this early. Yep. Terry's been let go. I guess he'll have to look elsewhere in New Orleans for a job.

A man torn down, ruined, revived, and sentenced to figurative and possibly literal death, all by the crack of the whip; should one man be given everything and another man trampled? -The crack of the whip- Who do you strike down?

Illustrator: Nick Brown



Illustrator: Holly Loyd